

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 22, 1953

Dear Spyros:

Thank you very much for your thoughtful letter of January 16th presenting in such complete detail the observations gathered on your recent Far Eastern trip.

It was a pleasure to talk with you in person after your return and I appreciate receiving these supplementary notes. I am forwarding a copy of your letter together with a carbon of this reply to the Secretary of State in order that your suggestions may receive more careful consideration.

Sincerely,



Mr. Spyros P. Skouras, President
Twentieth Century-Fox Film Corp.
444 West 56th Street
New York 19, New York

non-attribution

ILLEGIB

January 16, 1953.

Dear General:

As promised, I am sending you herewith my observations gathered on my Far Eastern trip. In doing so, let me thank you again for the audience you gave me and express my regret that this material was not sent sooner, due to my desire to make it as complete as possible. I have tried to do it promptly in order to present it to you before the Inauguration. A copy is enclosed for Mr. Dulles, as you requested.

Our trip took us to Hawaii, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Indonesia, Siam, Australia, New Zealand, Malaya and India, as well as a return trip by way of Egypt, Greece, Italy, Switzerland, England, Germany and France. With Mrs. Skouras, we travelled 72,000 miles over a period of 69 days.

These travels were primarily for business purposes in the interest of Twentieth Century-Fox. Nevertheless, I found myself returning home with a great deal of information and convictions, having been thrown into contact with many outstanding governmental and political leaders, members of the press, industrialists and others, and having talked to many hundreds of average people in the countries visited.

Even though I did not intend to look for material of the kind included in this memorandum, the nature of the motion picture business is such, with its interest to so many people and because of its identification with our free way of life, that an opportunity was given me to make observations and draw conclusions especially since the State Department, at the instance of Mr. Dean Acheson, had sent requests to all of its Embassies and Consulates in the countries visited to afford me an opportunity to see the officials of these countries.

First, let me make a personal observation and that is I am deeply grateful that I am an American in an hour of history when we cannot ignore the leadership which The Almighty has given to us and the awesome responsibility that comes with it. We never consciously looked for this responsibility, but circumstances beyond our control have unquestionably given it to us and whether we like it or not, today the world looks to us as its leaders.

From my heart also, I am grateful that in the crucial time ahead we will have your wise and steady guidance and the benefit of the goodwill and esteem the people of the world hold for you as an American.

No man is better equipped by experience than you are to guide the destiny of the United States and the free world because throughout your career you have been exposed to world conditions in many countries.

It is also reassuring that you have surrounded yourself with so many experienced and able men by appointments you have made to important posts.

On my return, I am filled with anxiety as well an enthusiasm over the potential opportunity we have to exert our leadership on the side of freedom in the eyes of more than a billion fellow human beings.

In many countries visited, some of the people live in wealth and abundance, while others live in poverty and misery. Many of these people are confused and are subject to communist propaganda, but a vast majority look hopefully to American help and leadership because they admire and respect America and the American people. This majority truly looks to America as to a Moses to lead them out of the wilderness and to a brighter day.

This respect is based on our economic position coupled with our military strength. Even though some of these people criticize our efforts to increase this strength for defense of the Western World, it is really amazing how much they depend upon the strength of America to aid them in case they are in difficulties. It is the same attitude that a man has about a policeman; he will criticize the cop but expects him to come running if he is in trouble. It is extraordinary, nevertheless, that these people are not afraid of us but consider our strength as a benevolent thing.

But I have also come back home with the conviction that while we build up our military strength and hold back military aggression, the real struggle of the century is the moral one for the minds and hearts of these Far Eastern multitudes. This challenge is worthy of the best qualities we possess in vision, careful organization, honesty and humane approach.

In Japan, the Philippines, Indonesia, Siam, Malaya, and India, not to mention Australia and New Zealand, the overwhelming majority of people are friendly to the United States because they realize that our purpose is only to help them and the people of the world become economically sound, self sufficient, and above all, free and independent.

This is contrary to the impressions sometimes given by the American press because too often press accounts, reflecting the reactions of supposed intellectuals and political leaders are not those of people generally including the business men, bankers, merchants and above all, the common people. In all these countries, my feeling increased that newspaper stories give an exaggerated account of the real feelings

of Far Eastern people who can be won to our way of thinking if we are as purposeful and alert as the Communists.

Of course, in all these countries the active Red elements, with Moscow money behind them, try to foment ill will against us, using every ruthless propaganda technique to hurt us in the eyes of the Asians. They talk against our policy, criticize our behaviour at home, attack everything and everybody, even our missionaries. But their clever and unprincipled propaganda is less effective with the masses of the people than it is with some of the intellectuals and political leaders whose reactions are reflected in the press.

Please remember that the Reds in this part of the world are of the same breed as those in America.

In my careful opinion, we have a far more valid claim upon the loyalties of the Far Eastern people than any other country possibly can have because we have proven our good intentions. Throughout this area the people are tremendously impressed by our performance in giving the Philippines their independence, in restoring Japan to the family of nations, and in another part of the world treating Germany magnanimously and helpfully, in spite of the fact that there is a lingering under current of fear regarding the restoration of the former enemy nations, particularly Japan.

Before giving some details about the trip, let me express the opinion that we can best overcome communist propaganda by a concrete program of adequate scope, based upon the most careful planning. We must show beyond doubt that we understand these people and their culture and history, and that we are sincere in wanting them to understand us and our aims for the sake of freedom.

While the task facing the Voice of America program and the personnel of the Point Four Administration is a huge one, there are many other ways in which we can improve our standing with these people and strengthen the moral empire we have begun to create for freedom.

First of all we should send people to these countries who are sympathetic to the local people, thoroughly indoctrinated in their customs and history, and if they are to be assigned in these countries, familiar with the language spoken.

It is especially imperative, in my view, that our Ambassadors and consular service people should have a knowledge of the language or at once try to learn it when they are sent to a given country. It is important that Ambassadors and Ministers should travel around the countries to which they are assigned and not stay in the capital all the time. They should come in contact with the people and show an interest in their non-political civic affairs where there is appropriate.

Nothing is more important to our cause than to prepare properly the emissaries of every kind that we send abroad.

It is of the utmost importance for men of outstanding calibre, in and out of the government, to visit these countries from time to time. These envoys of goodwill should include men of cabinet rank, military men, leading business men, distinguished publishers and writers and others who can add intelligently to our program for winning the confidence of these people. We should especially encourage business men to visit these Far Eastern countries when they have something concrete to offer in the way of improving trade relations and incurring goodwill.

In all cases, our spokesmen abroad, high and low, naturally cannot be effective if they brag about the power and wealth of America; they should be modest and understanding in every respect. Every individual who goes to a foreign country should be thoroughly briefed beforehand.

It was highly reassuring to read that Mr. Dulles is planning to visit India. These people welcome such high level manifestations of interest in them. When we do this in countries like Indonesia, Siam, Philippines and India for example, we show them that we do not take these people for granted but seriously want to deal with them on a mutual basis through the best talent and brain we have.

Please permit me to add that under proper circumstances, the President of the United States can be enormously effective by paying visits to these nations.

One of the questions on which the Red propagandists constantly try to picture us in the worst possible light, as you so well know, is that having to do with our treatment of colored peoples and minorities at home. It is not well enough known in any part of the world that we have made remarkable progress in the United States in eliminating prejudices and correcting conditions which the communists exaggerate out of all proportion to the facts. In our own time we have seen many abuses disappear.

One of our best ways of combatting the communist propaganda is for our representatives and emissaries to conduct themselves toward colored peoples of other countries in a manner above reproach. We can win their respect when we behave so that the people we are dealing with see that we regard them as equals. We can win the propaganda war with Russia by putting honesty and truth against the big lie.

It is important to follow through on your idea, applied first in Greece and now in Korea through General Van Fleet, of developing every army of every free nation in proportion to its resources, population and need, so that it can defend itself and the free world, for the strength of the free world is the most eloquent argument in confronting the Russians today. But the more we increase our moral influence, win the confidence and establish

the self-sufficiency of all free nations, the sooner the day will arrive when we will not have to bear the whole responsibility of maintaining the peace of the world.

As indicated, our trip convinced me above all that our greatest challenge is to bring about the moral and spiritual conquest of the world. Built upon these things, we can establish a moral empire that will be lasting and will not collapse like the empires of the past which were based principally on material conquest.

Just as we can prepare every official representative to take part in this campaign for the goodwill of other peoples, so can we encourage American industries, which have representatives in these countries, to indoctrinate their own people concerning the importance of every individual's conduct and business dealings in other countries. My own observation, during the trip, was that some of our business people who are stationed in the Far East, with the aid of our Embassies and Consulates, have an excellent conception of the responsibility they carry and aid greatly in presenting a good picture of America and the American system.

One of the worst dangers is from casual visitors who are not conscious of the responsibility that goes with America's world leadership. These people destroy the goodwill built up by other who are conscious of their responsibility. In my opinion, passports granted by the State Department should always be accompanied by material informing the bearer of conditions in the countries he expects to visit, outlining what is expected of him in his deportment while in that country. Indeed, it is perhaps worthwhile to establish a small unit in the State Department to unify a program of indoctrination for all Americans who visit other countries anywhere in the world.

Let me now say a word about the motion picture industry. My experience in many countries has convinced me that our films must portray us as we are - our virtues as well as our shortcomings.

Here again honesty and truth against lies and distortion are most effective.

Repeatedly, during our travels, there was evidence of the great impact of the American motion picture because we do not pull our punches in producing films, presenting the bad as well as the good side of American life. This is in contrast to the Russian method of using all of its controlled media to claim that everything Russian is benign and beneficial.

It is my strong opinion that we must not permit anyone to censor American movies that censure Americans.

The American motion picture cannot be over estimated as a weapon in an effort to win the allegiance of the people of the Far East.

During my trip and since my return, I have had many discussions with motion picture people regarding the need for more motion picture theatres in those areas especially in Indonesia, Siam, and India because it is my belief the Far Eastern countries offer a potential new market for the exhibition of American produced films which is almost limitless.

The influence upon the masses of the motion picture, as you know, is incalculable. In my opinion, no other media of communication had more effect in acquainting the peoples of foreign countries with American freedom, American products and the American way of life in general than our motion pictures. By and large, they have presented an honest and accurate picture of our way of life. They have been so effective that they have always been anathema to the dictators. Hitler, Mussolini and now Stalin banned them as one of their first acts in their campaigns of conquest and now the American film is not allowed to penetrate the Iron Curtain regions.

Evidence of the impact of the American motion picture was given to me in many countries. People in the Far East, especially in countries like India, spoke of our courage in producing films of the type of "OXBOW INCIDENT"; "How Green Was My Valley"; "Song of Bernadette"; "Keys of the Kingdom"; "Gentleman's Agreement"; "Pinky"; and "Snake-pit".

✓ On our return journey, it was impressing to find in Egypt that "Quo Vadis", a motion picture made by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, was being used as effective propaganda for good government because it shows what happens to people when government is corrupt.

Above everything else, our extensive trip has convinced me that the peoples of the Far East will be receptive and responsive if we tell adequately and modestly the true story of our way of life and make clear our sincerity in helping other nations.

Through the Marshall Plan, the NATO undertaking, our mutual help project among other things, we have now gained the offensive in the eyes of foreign nations in the psychological struggle with the communists and have succeeded in minimizing the effect of Soviet propaganda although this still remains a most dangerous threat.

We must maintain this advantage with confidence and faith justified by our tremendous resources not only in material things but in the God-given morality our system represents. This effort must be so forceful that the message of freedom will penetrate the Iron Curtain and encourage the satellite nations of the world to rebel against their Red masters. With this confidence and faith, we can encourage the world to join with us in an irresistible forward march of right against wrong so that a happy and serene world will be the lot of all peoples including those in the satellite countries behind the Iron Curtain. Ultimately our faith and purpose will break through that barrier.

Now let me mention some of my impressions on each country individually.

JAPAN

It was amazing to me to see the progress that has been made in the acceptance of democratic ideas among the Japanese people. In Tokyo and in other cities, as well as in the rural areas, I found it to be the spirit of the people to adopt democratic ideas and customs and to show pride in doing so. Indeed, it struck me that these people feel it is fashionable nowadays for it to be known that they accept democracy. They certainly are friendly and they are our allies. In spite of this, we cannot take them for granted. There is much yet to be done in imbuing them spiritually with our point of view.

As you know, the Japanese are both an industrial and agricultural people; they are hard workers and serious minded; the farmers get more out of their soil by extensive cultivation than any other people. Nevertheless, it still amazes me that the Japanese, with so little in material and natural resources, undertook a war on such a vast scale.

With this kind of a mentality, these people must be studied, watched and cultivated. For one thing, we should develop closer relations with these industrious but perplexing people by encouraging better relations between their best business people and our own. We should remember that the Japanese are realists who will be receptive and responsive if they are treated on a basis of equality and mutual trust. They are acquiring a good sense of humor as they become westernized. Many of them speak English and, incidentally, English is now taught in the Japanese schools.

One of the things we should understand about the Japanese is their attitude of mind regarding their religion and their Emperor. Although the respect of the people for the Emperor is stronger than ever, there is a trend toward Christianity. These are factors we must understand in our effort to keep the Japanese on our side.

It must be pointed out strongly that the underground communist movement has greater concentration in Japan than in any other place in the Far East, according to the impressions received. The movement is not as apparent as in the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaya, but it is stronger than in these countries and it must be reckoned with in every stage in our program.

In the short time elapsing since the end of the war, General MacArthur did a wonderful and extraordinary job in inspiring and educating these people. No one can visit this country without being tremendously impressed by this accomplishment. General Clark is now doing an equally good job in carrying on the program of democratization.

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PHILIPPINES

In the Philippines the feeling toward us has gradually changed. The old anti-American feeling is dying out and since we kept our promise to give them independence, they have a great deal of respect for America and Americans. The rank and file of the people want to improve their ties with the United States, and to consider themselves spiritually a part of America.

This country, to my mind, is a pivotal factor in the propaganda war not only because we have won this foothold in their convictions by our conduct toward them, but because of the Huk-communist revolution which is still going on. The Philippines are crucial to the western cause because of the violence of this effort to break down Filipino-American friendship.

The Huk movement is now waning to some extent, but it is still dangerous and we should have no laxity regarding it because it is a threat that can destroy our moral strength in the Philippines. Business people and others to whom I talked made it clear that they felt that every possible measure should be taken to eliminate the Huks completely.

We should be especially careful regarding the fitness and capacity of officials we sent to this country, checking them most carefully.

In brief talks with Admiral Spruance, I was deeply impressed by him. The Filipinos with whom I talked respect and regard him highly.

In the Philippines, as well as in other places in the Far East, we should be sure that we do not carry on our information program in a schoolmaster fashion, but deal with these people in a spirit of understanding and modesty.

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HONG KONG

In Hongkong, just outside Red China, we felt oppressively the extent of the communistic encroachment which has already taken place. Here, in contact with business men and many other Chinese, it was made clear to me that many of the Chinese who are behind the Red borders, only 40 miles away, feel that they have been enslaved.

One cannot help but feel the tragic effect of our failure to hold this vast population which was so predominantly pro-American. All those I spoke with long for the day when they will regain their freedom.

When we saw transports in the harbor with steam up, ready to take off Europeans and Americans in case of emergency, we realized more than ever that this area, like South Korea and West Germany, is one of the powder kegs of the world.

Yet, amidst this atmosphere and much international intrigue, the Chinese population of two and a half million in Hongkong, outwardly seem calm and stoical. They are going about their business as usual, building homes and planning future business expansion.

SIAM

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Siam is a country of eighteen million people who will look to us for guidance if we try to understand them. The Siamese are an extremely courteous and cheerful people and justify the name we give the country "The land of smiles", and with intelligent cultivation they will be our friends and allies.

Siam occupies a strategic position and because it is a borderline country, we must adopt the most realistic measures in dealing with the people assigning our most capable emissaries and applying our best measures, for we must hold this country on our side at all odds. We went to great lengths to make Greece and Turkey safe from communism and although Siam is not an exact parallel, we must give more and more attention doing much more than we are doing at present in order to save this country and that of China.

As in Japan, Siam has a strong underground communist movement and again in this instance we cannot be too watchful.

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INDONESIA

The Indonesians are progressive and hopeful in their attitude toward the future. They number eighty million and Indonesia is the wealthiest of the Asiatic countries and among the world's youngest independent nations. These people, however, are so eager to absorb the spirit of democracy that they are victims of some confusion which plays into the hands of the communists.

Unfortunately, under the Dutch regime these people were never given an opportunity to advance and they are not able to cope with their independence.

Since the Indonesians were helped both by our side and by the communists in gaining their independence, they are confused and trying to satisfy both sides, they are not afraid of their neutrality. They overlook the disastrous action taken by the communists in undermining them by fomenting revolution.

While in Djakarta, everyone told me that outside of the city there are roving bands of communists and this subject is one of common talk there.

Unless we give immediate and extensive attention to Indonesia we run the risk of this country being lost to the Reds.

President Soekarno is a capable man and talks proudly of the country's neutrality. Even so, I ventured to call his attention to the fact that he had better be prepared to keep law and order in his own borders - otherwise his neutrality will be violated.

Indonesians are obviously naive and do not seem to understand their peril. They have not learned, as we have, that strength and preparedness are the only weapons against ruthless aggression.

In their present state of mind, they are attempting to satisfy every individual complaint no matter how whimsical or trivial and this effects all industries including motion pictures which are subject to a drastic censorship.

This is a country where we should exert effort and ingenuity in order to sway the people to our side by helping them to develop their industry, their resources and their self-sufficiency.

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AUSTRALIA - NEW ZEALAND

Before going to Malaya and India, we had an extended visit in Australia and New Zealand. Naturally, these countries have much in common with us, having been our allies in the war, and they share our views completely.

We had the privilege in Canborra, Australia, of staying overnight with Governor General McKell, and had an opportunity to hear from him about extensive development projects for Australia, which seems to be on the threshold of a greater economic era in spite of its small present population.

One undertaking about which we learned was the Snowy Mountain Hydro Electric project which is already in operation and which ultimately will cost two hundred million pounds. This will create vast new fertile areas.

Both Australia and New Zealand are countries of vast and untapped wealth and resources.

Incidentally, American motion pictures are equally popular in these countries with English motion pictures and constitute the principal entertainment of the masses.

This does not go into detail concerning these two countries, as they are like the United States.

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MALAYA

Our visit to Singapore made keener my appreciation of the nature of the struggle for the allegiance of the Far Eastern people, for this fabulous city, the famed outpost of the Orient, is another of the focal points.

In Federated Malaya the communist threat is worse than it is in the Philippines and Indonesia, because a condition of revolution has been inspired by the communists and here again a great deal of concentrated attention should be given to this area in order to save it from communistic domination.

We found much in Singapore to remind us that these people are susceptible to Western influence because they already have been indoctrinated in Western ways, to a large extent, by the English. They are also great motion picture fans and prefer American motion pictures.

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INDIA

It was at once obvious to me in India, where we visited both Calcutta and Bombay, that the Indian States, with their five hundred million people, are a major battleground in the ideological conflict between Red Russia and the free world.

We first visited Calcutta where we were appalled by the poverty and misery of so many people in this huge metropolis. Conditions were much better in Bombay, which is among the great cities of the world.

Yet, everywhere in India where a majority of the people are illiterate and a minority highly cultured and intelligent, we were amazed to find the goodwill that America enjoys in this area. The Indian people are very realistic in their appreciation of the help that we have given to them, not only the moral support we gave to their struggle for independence, but in aiding them in their present needs. This goodwill can be the basis for an enlarged effort to make them understand even better that our objectives are unselfish.

In endeavoring to develop their culture, the Indian people have already made their motion picture production industry the third largest in the world. Yet this is one of the few countries where the motion picture has not reached into the minds and hearts of the masses because there are only three thousand theatres in all the Indian States to serve the huge population. I discussed this condition with many exhibitors, producers, officials and other Indians because additional theatres can be an instrument through which to educate the illiterate masses in Western ideas.

Up to now, these people have lived within themselves and have been reluctant to be exposed to Western civilization, but we must concentrate on this problem in order to take advantage of the underlying attitude for the sympathetic interest they have. Indeed, the motion picture can be an helpful weapon of democracy in this region where a vast pioneering job must be done.

The Hindu people are naturally a peaceful people and it is not surprising that they believe they will fare better through neutrality. This is why it is a most important responsibility of ours to help them to learn to police themselves and to build up their own strength. We should help them to see the necessity of having their own army to protect themselves.

There is no more important mission for us than that of saving India, since these people are already basically well disposed towards us and have been indoctrinated in Western ways to some extent by the British.

As mentioned previously, it is of tremendous importance that Mr. Dulles is planning to visit this country and it is more important in India than anywhere else that our emissaries go there fully briefed about the people and their customs and that those stationed in India have a knowledge of Hindustani.

Everywhere in India people spoke highly of Mr. Chester Bowles. He is really doing the kind of a job we like an ambassador to do. Unfortunately, we did not go to Delhi learning that Mr. Bowles was not there.

My report does not cover Pakistan because we were unable to go there and cannot speak with authority about that region.

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Throughout my Far Eastern travels, I was constantly conscious of the shrunken size of the modern world because of modern communication methods. My journey from Singapore to Calcutta, for example, was accomplished in less than 4½ hours and this is a trip of almost two thousand miles.

Throughout my travels, which took me through the Middle East and Europe on my way home, including Egypt, Greece, Italy, Switzerland, England, Germany and France, I also often thought of your American Legion address on August 25th in which you spoke not only of the enslaved tens of millions of people in Europe but of the hundreds of millions made captive in China, Tibet, Inner Mongolia, Northern Korea, Northern Japan and Northern Indo-China, which included your statement that "The American conscience can never know peace until these people are restored again to being masters of their own fate."

This is the reason why I told you, during the recent interview you granted me at the Commodore, that I could easily express the opinion that the Korean problem must be solved by complete victory.

By achieving a total and final victory, we will convince the satellite nations that Communist aggression cannot go on. The defeat of the Communists will bring them to the realization that the world is resolved and determined against such aggression and will never tolerate it.

Since Korea is the fountainhead of all the propaganda that Russia manufactures and feeds to the unfortunate satellite nations, I am mindful of the great and awesome responsibility confronting you and your Cabinet in making the decisions which will be of such profound moment to mankind and to the future of world peace.

As we travelled through the countries which are still free in the Far East, I recalled your warning in the American Legion speech that the Soviets not only are determined to consolidate the economic power and manpower of the satellite countries they have seized, but hope to infiltrate and organize other areas still in the free world in order to match the power and strength of America which they fear so much.

A conclusive victory in Korea will have a shattering effect upon these plans.

In that address, I think you summed up magnificently the magnitude of the crusade that must be carried on in order that the dignity and well-being of mankind may be supreme in this world of ours.

Therefore, it is my prayer that these humble observations of mine may be of some use as you chart our course for the future.

May The Almighty continue to guide you in your grave new responsibility.

With kindest regards.

Sincerely,

Honorable Dwight D. Eisenhower,
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